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SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF CAPITAL AND LABOUR WITH THE BEARING OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE SUBJECT

BEING AN

ADDRESS

(REVISED AND ENLARGED)

BEFORE THE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

OF MONTREAL

BY

GEORGE HAGUE.

MONTREAL:
"WITNESS" PRINTING HOUSE.
1894.

BR 115
E 3
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BR 115
E 3
H 24

PREFACE

There have been brought forward during the present century many theories as to the position and relations of Employers and Employed; the causes and cure for poverty, and the general amelioration in the lot of the toilers and workers of the community.

I propose in this brief paper to notice and comment upon some of these proposals, such as:—

The throwing open of *Land* to the people.

The shortening of the Hours of Labour by law.

The giving of workmen a Greater Share in what they produce.

Co-operative working and Profit Sharing.

The ignoring of the law of Supply and Demand.

The Distribution of Surplus Wealth.

Then lastly:—

I shall endeavour to shew what is the bearing of the teaching of Christianity on the subject.

BR 115
E 3
H 24

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The metaphysical terms, Labour and Capital, constantly give rise to many misconceptions, and in this, which I desire to be a practical paper, I have throughout looked at them in the concrete, and considered the subject as a question of Labourers and Capitalists, as well as of Employers and Employed.

In entering upon this subject, I begin by saying that it is one in which I have not been without practical experience.

I have been a servant of others all my life and can therefore speak from the standpoint of a servant.

I have known by practical experience what continuous hard work, for years together, means. And if any man here has had more experience of hardship for long continued years than I have, his lot is not to be envied.

At the same time, for long periods together, I have had intimate opportunities of knowing the views of the class of employers and the men of large capital.

The subject, therefore, is not a strange one to me.

EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYED.

In entering upon active life, when a man becomes old enough to choose, it is always a practical question: Shall he commence for himself or shall he serve another? If he commences for himself, he takes the risk along with the chance, of success or failure. If he serves another he is safe from the risk of loss, but he gives up the chance of sharing in success. These two go inevitably together.

No man can at the same time be exempt from loss, and be a sharer of profit.

In entering on the service of another he becomes a party to a contract. There are many forms of contract, but they all resolve themselves into this :—You pay me so much money and I will do certain work. The Employé gets his money whether the Employer makes or loses. The law very properly protects him. The Employer may go on getting no return for years, and even losing a portion of his capital year after year, yet the workman gets paid. He is exempt from all the care, anxiety and fear that beset every man carrying on business for himself.

THE LAW OF SUCCESS.

The success of every business enterprise depends on Management. Success in conducting a business is a matter purely and solely of calculation, forethought, knowledge, skill, and industry, on the part of those who have the management of it. The workman, as workman, has little or nothing to do with it. The skilled workman who works for an Employer that fails (and there are very many such) does as good work as the workman who works for the Employer who succeeds. Success or failure arise from causes entirely out of his sphere. As then the profits of an enterprise are not made by him, he has no right to share them, and as the losses do not arise through him, he cannot in reason be called upon to share them. It is only when he becomes a co-operator or partner in the enterprise, whether his share be fifty dollars or five thousand; it is only then that he has anything to do with profit sharing or loss sharing, all dreams of unpractical theorists notwithstanding.

BR 115
E 3
H 24

SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

If three or four working men join together to engage in business on their own account, they must at once encounter what by some persons is considered an inevitable Law; the operation of which is very much disliked by others, viz., the Law of Supply and Demand.

This law is just as strenuously upheld by some as it is denounced by others.

To ascertain how the law operates, let us follow out what would take place were a business of any description started.

The first question to come before the originators of the enterprise, whether it were proposed to buy and sell, or to produce and sell, would be this: What shall we buy; or what shall we make? One of the parties to the enterprise would probably say: "We must buy or make something we can *sell*, something for which there is a *demand*." Another, who holds that the law of supply and demand is an unreasonable law, proposes that the business shall be carried on in entire disregard of it. His counsel, we will suppose, prevails. These men then, being skilled mechanics, start a manufactory. Let it be supposed that they make horseshoes. Disregarding the law of supply and demand, they absolutely refuse to consider whether they shall make such horseshoes as anybody *wants*. They make the horseshoes of some pattern which pleases themselves, of good material, finely polished, well made in every respect. But when they try to *sell* the articles nobody *wants* them. Nobody can *use* them; there is, therefore, no *demand* for them, and their labour in making them is thrown away.

If a Saw-mill is started on the same principle of ignoring the law of supply and demand, lumber will be cut into lengths most convenient for the sawyers. But when these are brought to the builder, he may say: "I

can make no *use* of boards so cut up. I do not want them." The operators of the saw-mill now find they have laboured in vain. They have disregarded the law of supply and demand, and their lumber is left on their hands. They may pile it up in their yard but they cannot sell it. A Farmer is himself a sort of manufacturer. If he works his farm on the principle of disregarding this law, he will find it much easier to grow thistles and dandelion than to grow wheat and barley. But when he goes to market he cannot sell his thistles: nobody wants them. There is no demand for them. What men do demand this man has not got.

Let us suppose that a whole State were organized in disregard of supply and demand, and that such disregard could be enforced by law. The man who had the horse-shoes might then go to the State and say: "This hardware merchant won't buy my horseshoes; I want redress. You must compel him to buy and pay for them, for I want money." The hardware merchant in these circumstances would turn to the man who has a team of horses and say: "You must buy these shoes." He says: "I can't buy them; they are totally unfit for my horses." What then is to be done with them? A State organized on this principle would soon have warehouses full of things that nobody wants, and the men who had sense enough to make things that *are* wanted, would have to pay for them. Something of this kind took place when great co-operative workshops were started in Paris by the Provisional Government that dethroned Louis Phillippe. They were of course an absolute failure.

No State would enact laws of this kind. But Nature itself enacts the law, that every man who *supplies* anything must consider what is *wanted;* that is, he must act

BR 115
E 3
H 24

on the law of supply or demand, or be punished by having all that he has made left on his hands.

It is precisely so with labour, which is truly described as a commodity. But the Labourer is not a commodity. He used to be such, in the States of the South, and then he himself, the labourer, was bought and sold in the market. That however is past. But labour is a commodity and subject to the law of Demand and Supply. The law works in this way:—Any man wanting employment must submit to be asked the question: What can you *do?* If such a one goes to a Canadian farmer and in response to the question says: "I know all about cultivating the tea plant. I can grow cotton, indigo and arrowroot." The farmer will undoubtedly say: "You are not the kind of man I *want.* I have no use for you." Another man, let us suppose, goes to an office in the city, as men are doing constantly. "What can you do?" says the man of business. "I can translate Arabic and Sanscrit, and write and read letters in Persian and Cingalese." "But can you write English?" "I know nothing about English." "Can you write French?" "I know nothing about French." The answer will inevitably be: "I cannot employ you; I do not *want* a man like you." On the other hand, an English labourer accustomed to farm work and the care of cattle goes to a farmer. The farmer *wants* a man like him, if he wants a man at all. There is the *demand,* and there is the supply, and an engagement can be made at once.

Supply and Demand have also to do with the *quantity* of goods as well as the description.

A man who buys or produces has constantly before him the question: "Is the market sufficiently supplied with the kind of goods I propose to deal in?" How is he to ascertain?

The endeavouring to arrive at a business-like answer

will make him acquainted with another Economic Law that has been foolishly assailed, viz., that of "*buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest.*"

This law is really a law of beneficence. For let us consider why it is that the same goods are dear in one place and cheap in another.

It is because there are too many of them in one place and too few in another.

When goods become scarce, and there is not enough of them, the price rises.

When they become plentiful, the price falls.

To take a supply of goods, then, from the place where there are too many of them, to the place where there are too few, is undoubtedly beneficent to both districts of country.

The price, therefore, is an indication of how the law of supply and demand is working.

If the price of staples is low, that is not the place to send more to. The old adage of "sending coals to Newcastle" applies here.

On the other hand, when goods are dear, and especially if they are abnormally dear, it is a clear indication that any one who has those goods will find a profitable market for them in that place, and do service to the people who inhabit it.

This law is as certain as the law of the tides, and like all other natural laws, economic or otherwise, is beneficent in its operation.

These remarks apply to the market for labour, as well as the market for commodities. But there are considerations applicable to labour which are not applicable to commodities.

It may be better, and often is, for a labourer to remain in the spot where he is and his family are settled, and accept lower wages for a time, rather than be at the incon-

BR 115
E 3
H 24

venience and loss of moving himself and family to a sphere where higher wages prevail. For this higher rate of wages may be only temporary, and a high scale of wages may be fully offset by the higher cost of living, and so, really be no higher at all.

CO-OPERATION.

Under this head we may include systematic Sharing of Profits by employers and workmen. There is nothing to prevent any number of working men from joining together and engaging in any line of business they choose, clubbing their savings, dividing the work, and managing the enterprise as they may agree among themselves. Two may do it, or two hundred. If the number is large enough to do all there is to do, there will be no Wage question at all. They will divide amongst them all that may result, whether much or little. But they will have to wait until money comes in before any of them can get money out of the enterprise, and they may have to wait a considerable time; and they will be exposed to the risk of not getting paid, for the law will certainly not give them any special protection. They are contractors, not artizans. All business partnerships are on the co-operative principle; so are all our joint stock companies; and all have to deal with questions like these. At the end of a certain time the result of the enterprise is taken, and the profit shared, or the loss; for in all such enterprises loss must be taken into account as well as profit. If men say, that in these days they will have no chance against the great concerns, the ready answer is, nearly every great manufacturing firm or company in this country began in this manner. I have before me several cases. Two or three intelligent and thrifty working men

laid their heads and savings together, opened a little shop, made a few ploughs, then a few harrows, then another kind of machine, making them well; or they took a little building contract, working with their own hands, drawing as little as possible for maintenance meantime until the result was determined. Out of such small beginnings as this have arisen nearly all the great manufacturing concerns of to-day.

But all who tried have not succeeded. Men must take the risk of loss if they desire to share the profit. If the loss exceeds the profit they lose their savings, buy some experience, and become workmen again.

There is nothing, I say, to prevent any intelligent working man starting in business for himself, or any two or more starting in the same way. But such partnerships, companies, or co-operative enterprises must in the nature of things compete with other persons or partnerships in the same line of trade, unless it is proposed that the whole business of the country shall be carried on by the Government, an arrangement which would surely end in despotism on the one hand and slavery on the other.

CAN LARGE CAPITALISTS HAVE COME BY THEIR MONEY HONESTLY?

This question is only connected indirectly with the questions discussed. But as it is sometimes asked by men who labour, I make a few suggestions on the subject.

No man, it has been said, *can earn a million.*

Probably not, in the sphere of observation open to those who make the assertion.

But there are larger spheres. For example:—When

BR 115
E 3
H 24

the United States were at war with the South, they employed a firm of brokers to raise money for them in Europe, paying a small percentage of commission for the service. The amount borrowed during the course of the war was enormous, amounting to over two thousand millions of dollars! and the commission amounted to over ten millions! This was all earned in three years.

One of the partners told me the whole *modus operandi* of the affair a few years after the war.

Some years afterwards, in the course of their business, they lost the whole of it and became bankrupt.

So millions can be both made and lost.

Some of the railways of this continent have cost scores and even hundreds of millions!

Sometimes, before being finished, a line may come to a stop and be bankrupt.

Two or three persons may join their means and credit together, buy up the bankrupt road, finish it, render in doing so enormous service to large tracts of country, and make a profit of some millions each on the operation.

They might easily have lost as much. Of that they had to take the risk.

Such ventures, and lawful ventures they are, at times *do* ruin men.

But if the enterprise is crowned with success, whole states and territories are benefited by it, with all their inhabitants, workmen and their families included.

But some may say:—No man can *earn* a million by working with his hands. At first sight, and considering the various occupations of men, this assertion might seem well founded.

But I have seen pictures that could be painted in a

week, and be readily sold in the open market for ten thousand dollars or more each.

It would not be difficult for a man to earn a million dollars at that kind of work, but then, there was only one man in the world that could do it.

I have known a man earn five thousand dollars for less than a day's work at his calling in life. It was easy enough to run up a million here also, but then again, there was only one man whose services were worth as much.

A great firm in Europe, whose capital supplies the means of carrying on the business of every nation in the world, and has for nearly a century found the means of paying the wages of hundreds of thousands of workmen, once made five millions of dollars by a single purchase.

The transaction was simply in the course of their business, and the result might have been as many millions in a contrary direction. That was the risk they ran. The purchase, however, was a success, and that five millions has fructified in hundreds of useful works in all parts of the world, the United States and Canada included, ever since.

These great sums are not locked up in iron safes. They are not lying dead or useless anywhere, but are the feeders of vast enterprises, by which the great army of artizans and workers find employment in every sphere of labour in the world.

It *does* then fall to the lot of some men (though they are very few) to have the power and the opportunity of earning or making much more than a million.

But mark this; No millionaire can live to himself. By the very constitution of the world it inevitably comes about that this wealth is diffused, and the workers of the world all share in it according to their capacity.

I am well aware, too, that large fortunes are sometimes made by means which are little better than mere gambling

BR 115
E 3
H 24

and sometimes little better than mere robbery. But even in these cases it is generally that money is transferred from the pocket of one gambler to another, or from the pockets of a number of gamblers to one, the mass of the community being neither poorer nor richer by what has been done. In these schemes for transferring realized wealth from one pocket to another, where one succeeds, multitudes fail. And the man who succeeds almost invariably finds his turn to fail come round, unless he draws off from the arena of speculation and employs his energies in production or distribution.

NOTE.—When Louis Napoleon became Emperor of France an annual allowance was settled upon him, as such, of twenty-five millions of francs per annum. This amounts to a hundred thousand dollars per week, or nearly fifteen thousand dollars per day. This sum was settled by the free will of the nation. Now Louis Napoleon only a few years before was living in London on a very small income, not more than five or ten dollars a day probably.

The difference between his income then and afterwards, is almost inconceivable.

Yet if we consider closely, and ask ourselves how much of all this vast income of his station the Emperor spent upon *himself*, for his own food, his dress, and his lodging, we shall probably find the sum to amount to not very much more than he spent in London. Suppose the sum is placed at fifty dollars, or even at a hundred dollars a day, what becomes of the rest of the fifteen thousand? Let us think, and we shall speedily find that it is all *diffused* through a thousand various channels, to the people, high and low, of all France, and of Germany, and of Italy, and of England, and of the United States. Every rich man is a trustee or steward, whether he wills it or not.

One of the Astor family of New York was conversing with a friend on a certain occasion, when the friend congratulated the great capitalist on having attained such a position. Thereupon Astor commenced enumerating the difficulties and annoyances arising from the management of his multifarious properties: the law-suits, the arbitrations, the claims for remission of impending obligations, the liability to trespass, to fire, to deterioration, all which need to be guarded against; the continual care of new investments as old ones fell due, and numerous other matters not needful to particularize.

After dwelling on these things, all entailing the necessity of constant and wearing toil, he paused a moment, then, looking his friend

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE.

The Land, it is said, is the inheritance of the People. "The Heavens are the Lord's, but the Earth hath he given to the children of men." Perfectly true. God did not give the world to beasts, nor to angels, but to mankind. But the point is: how is the world to be divided up?

One may say: No man has any right to property in land at all, which surely carries with it that no State has any right to it either, for a State is only an aggregation of men. But with regard to individuals, and to come down from vague abstractions to practical facts, is it intended that any man, at his pleasure, can go to any other man who occupies land and demand that it be given up to him? This is a method which would speedily end in

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

It will probably be said: This is not what we mean, but that each State shall continue to *own* its land, and not part with the freehold of it. Even then the question of the *right* of the State will crop up.

What right, for example, have we English-speaking people to this portion of Canada? It belonged to France. Did we buy it? No! we took it. But France had no better title than we, for France took it also. It all belonged to the Indians once.

So there may be some curious questions about the right of *States* with regard to land. But putting these aside, and not calling the title of the State in question, the point to be considered is this: How is the State to divide the

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full in the face, he said to him: "Would you, now, do all this for a mere *maintenance?*" "A mere maintenance," replied his friend, "indeed I would not." "Well," replied Astor, "that is all that *I* get out of it. Everything beyond a maintenance goes to others."

BR 115
E 3
H 24

land of the country so as to make the best use of it for its inhabitants? The land of this country was once wholly covered by forests, and in its natural state was not worth a dollar. If the State, at this present time, desired to impose a tax upon the land of Canada at its natural value, before labour had been applied to it, such a tax would yield absolutely nothing. How, then, does land acquire any monetary value? I answer, by the application of *Labour* and *Money*.

The first labour to be applied is that of Surveys. That of course is undertaken by the State, and a matter of heavy expenditure it is. The Surveyor-General was once the most important official in the country, next to the Governor. Any one who desires to know what the survey of large tracts of country means, may be referred to the Department of the Interior at Ottawa, or the Crown Lands Department in Toronto or Quebec.

Then there is the making of Roads, the building of Bridges, etc., so as to enable settlers to proceed to occupation.

Supposing the State to do this preliminary work, and to have divided the land into lots, we will further suppose the rule is laid down that the Government will not part with the freehold. That being understood, persons wanting the use or occupation of land now make their appearance. It is the interest of the State that they should have it.

"Will you let me have this lot?" they say to the State.

"Certainly; for so much ground rent per annum," the amount calculated on the expenditure the State has already made. (The land, be it remembered, is still covered with forests.)

But before a settler can get anything out of land he must put both money and labour into it.

"How long, then, can I have it—for five years, ten years, twenty years?"

No man, in his senses, would make a bargain for less than twenty-five years, for it will take the greater part of that time to make a decent farm out of it; and when it is made, the settler will certainly desire some recompense for the severe toil of clearing.

"But can I depend upon *sure possession?*" the settler asks. "What is to hinder another man coming along next year and taking the land from me?"

Quiet possession must be assured, or no man would put money and labour into it. This point concluded, the settler now enters upon his land, and begins the arduous labour of clearing with heart and confidence. He has secure possession. That land is his for the next twenty-five years at any rate. The people may want it, but they can no more get it than if it was his freehold.

But the settler does not go as far as this without asking another question:

"At the end of twenty-five years, what then? Am I to give up possession of this farm to the State, with all the improvements I have made: the cleared ground, the house, barns, orchards and fences?"

"By no means," says the State. "We don't want to rob you of the fruit of your labour. If we take the farm from you we will pay for improvements, or renew your lease."

Now, it is evident that in an average of cases, if a fair bargain is made, the man will get as much for his improvements as if he was a freeholder. The interest of the State in the land is a trifle compared with his own, for the cost of surveying and roadmaking, large as that is, is a mere trifle compared with the cost of clearing, stubbing, fencing, planting and building. The farm is practically worth what he has done to it, and no more.

But why should the State take the farm at all?

BR 115
E 3
H 24

What the State wants is Revenue, *Taxes.* It would take an enormous sum of money to pay for all improvements on all the farms in the country. The State could never borrow money enough; and it would undoubtedly say to the settler: "Take another lease, and continue to make your farm a source of food for the people, and revenue to the State."

But then it is perfectly evident that the land is locked up. It is taken away from the people, no one of the people can lease it, the State has guaranteed possession, and the land is as much out of their reach as if the occupier had a freehold.

At the end of another twenty-five years the same thing will be sure to take place, and the final result must ensue, that the State will grant leases which are in effect perpetual.

This, or something to this effect, is the only conceivable way by which the State could at once maintain a freehold in the land, and at the same time ensure its development, cultivation, and improvement for the supply of the wants of the people.

All the cultivated land in the Dominion has passed through this process of reclamation, clearing, and gradual improvement, and I maintain that both the Government and the people are just as well off by having given deeds of the *freehold* as if they had given leases, on any terms which a rational man would accept.*

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*Note.—The only definite proposal for carrying into effect the ideas of those who think the land should be thrown open is this, that any *unoccupied* land should be so held that any person desiring should be at liberty to enter upon it.

With regard to this proposal it must be remembered that there is no unoccupied *cleared* land in Canada. Ninety-nine farms out of the hundred are owned and occupied by the farmer, and the rest, though leased, are occupied. With regard to forest land, it is all either owned by farmers, who are reserving it for firewood or for future clearing, or

Land in Towns and Cities is in some respects different from land in the country. The Jewish law of the land returning to the family in fifty years did not apply to land in towns. Lev. xxv., 29–30.

But after all, many of the same primary considerations are applicable.

The State at first owns all the land in the country. Suppose it was to apply the theory of not parting with the freehold to the land on which a town is built.

Here is a plot of land where people settle thickly round a water-power or some suitability, and the place becomes a centre of attraction.

The State surveys the ground, and divides it into town lots.

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else by the Government. The Government will gladly enough make arrangement for anyone to enter on forest land as a settler on very liberal terms. But suppose a person without money wants to occupy a piece of forest land. How is he to get a living out of it? One can fancy the blank dismay of an artisan turned loose on a hundred acres of forest with no money and no one to pay him wages. What could he do? How will those trees and bushes yield him a supply for his wants? He would not be there a day before finding out that he cannot get a living out of forest land but by putting money into it, that is, he must apply Capital, as well as Labour.

The very same thing applies to prairie land. The Government of Manitoba will give away enough prairie land to make a farm to any man who will undertake to cultivate it and build a house on the lot. But again, the question comes: How can a man without money get a living out of bare prairie? A man would be as destitute if turned loose on a hundred acres of prairie, as on a hundred acres of forest. He would starve if no one supplied his wants, and would find out by bitter experience that money must be applied to prairie land as well as to forest land before a living can be got from it.

The truth is, that no land in the world, whether forest land, or open prairie, or plain, is capable of yielding a living to any man until both Capital and Labour have been applied to it. The capital may be small, not more than enough to buy a cow or two, and a few tools, and also food for a few months, but capital there must be.

Any of our settlers who have made a farm out of either forest or prairie could give practical points to theorists on this subject.

BR 115
E 3
H 24

Now then come the applicants. Some locations are more desirable than others, and therefore more persons want them. The want leads to willingness to pay a premium for lots considered to be the most suitable, and the State would be bound in the interest of the people to lease to the highest bidder, just as it leases the forests now under the name of Limits. But no sane man would build on any lot unless he has assured possession of it for a long term, forty or fifty years at least, with provision for renewal of the lease.

Each of these lots is then tied up from the body of the people in the very nature of things.

This is on the supposition that the lots leased by the State are wanted for some immediate purpose of building or ornament.

But parties will be willing to lease *before* they are ready to build, or with the idea of holding till some others can build. Thus they become lessees of vacant lots.

But, in leasing and paying taxes, they have to take the risk of losing money as well as making money.

It is a great delusion to suppose that all lands, in all towns, go on increasing in value; a delusion that deceived so great a thinker as Stuart Mill. Had he lived till our own time he would have been undeceived. For experience has contradicted it. Toronto, in my recollection, has been in such a state of depression that you could not give vacant lots away; and lots even in good localities, that had been bought at high prices.

Hundreds of people have been impoverished and ruined by continued depreciation in the value of vacant lots, for which, year after year, they had paid taxes out of their labour, otherwise applied.

So, if a man takes a lease of vacant property, it is perfectly reasonable that he should have quiet possession and a long lease; and that he take the profit, if profit there be, and the loss, if there be a loss.

But let us suppose there has been an increase in the value of all leases, and that this man comes to the end of his term; on what principle of equity does the general government come in for a share of the increased value, or claim the whole of it?

Why should the people of Halifax and Vancouver share in the increased value of leases in Montreal?

Why should even the people of this Province of Quebec, say the people of Gaspé and of the Eastern Townships, share in the increase?

Why should even the inhabitants of the city? For the city never owned the land at all.

These are practical and pertinent questions.

In my humble judgment, the system of dealing with city property by leaseholders, in the end, and in a long course of years, must needs work out (broadly speaking) the same results—so far as the public is concerned—as the present system of selling freeholds. *But in both cases the land is equally locked up from the general use of the people.*

It is confessedly a more complicated subject than the dealing with land in country districts, but I cannot see that any equitable dealing with land in cities on different principles from those which now prevail (which I am convinced are equitable) could be of any appreciable benefit to the individual workman.

The truth is, that Henry George's theory of land is unworkable.

This, I have no doubt, is the reason why, though his theories have been before the people of the United States for many years, no attempt has been made to embody them in legislation, which is the only way to give them effect. His ideas are those of theorists who have had no practical acquaintance with the subject. I venture to say, they are not shared in by any man who has ever had

BR 115
E 3
H 24

experience in dealing with land, either as settler, leaseholder, buyer, seller, cultivator, or owner.

But as to land in this country: if any workingman wishes to try the experiment of living by the land, he has just as much opportunity of doing it as any of those who settled on it in former days, and made it what it is.

I say *made* it, for the land, in the condition in which we see it around us, capable of being useful to the community, is a Manufacture, as much a product of human capital and labour as a railway car.

Out of raw materials, the handiwork of the Creator, both are fashioned.

There is abundance of this raw material, of uncleared land in this Province, which any man can have for a mere nothing.

Or, if he does not care for the twenty years of labour required to turn a forest into a farm, there is any amount of land in the North-West, of which he can have a grant sufficient to manufacture a farm for nothing at all.

And he will have as good a chance of succeeding, as the men had who came here originally and cleared the forests or settled the prairie. Large numbers of them were artizans and mechanics, but they developed into practical and successful farmers, owning their own land.

But if a number of men want to have their "pick" of the best farms on this Island, or in the Townships, or in Ontario, or of the best properties in Montreal, the question will be, "Who is to get which?"

And who can settle that? And who is to guarantee quiet possession? And what is to be done with those who are turned out and robbed of the fruit of their labour?

DO WORKMEN GET THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABOUR?

Workmen sometimes think they do not get enough of the proceeds of their work, and consider they would do far better if all work were done co-operatively.

Enquiry of the facts would, however, show, in many instances, that workmen have got far more than any share that would have come to them had they undertaken the work co-operatively as a partnership.

Let me give an example: Suppose the army of labourers and artizans who built the Grand Trunk Railway and its branches, including the men who made the iron in England, had taken a contract to do it; on the condition that they should get for the road all that was in it, and be paid the market value of the road when it was complete.

That would be fair, would it not? What would have been the result?

Just this: That they would have got many millions of dollars less than they *did* get, and that most of them would have been ruined for life!

We could multiply this example by scores on this continent, for the same might be said, in due proportion, of more than half the railways which have been built.

That is a practical example on a very large scale. I will give you a small one.

A person in this city whom I know, spent about $6,000, —nearly all paid out in wages—in making alterations in the house he lived in. He thought these were improvements of value, or they would not have been made.

By-and-bye he sold the house; he sold it in the open market for as much as he could get for it.

The result was that every dollar of this $6,000 was thrown away; he got for his house just what he paid originally, before the improvements were made.

BR 115
E 3
H 24

Now, had these workmen done the work co-operatively, and agreed to be paid by results, they would have been paid nothing. Their work, when put to a practical test, was found not worth a dollar.

I can point to large factories in this country that have been worked for years, for six, eight or ten, purely for the benefit of the operators, the proprietors never getting a dollar of return.

If the workmen had worked co-operatively and been paid according to results, they would have been paid certainly not more than three-quarters of what they received during all these years.

The extra quarter represents *overpayment*, on co-operative principles.

But if any workmen desire to work on co-operative lines, it is perfectly open to them to do so.

Let a few workmen combine, put together their savings, start a business, open a shop, accept a contract, and take the risk of results. This is the way in which nearly all the great manufacturing concerns now amongst us started, and the way is just as open as ever.

But in that case they run their chance of losses as well as of profits. For profit and loss go together.

The same law which inviolably protects the workman's wages when he works for another, will make him responsible to the creditors of a concern in which he has shared profits in case the concern goes wrong.

All this goes to shew, that the system under which men who labour receive a certain sum week by week, or month by month, which sum is made secure to them, no matter what the result of their work may be, is the most suitable to the labourer's circumstances, and the most beneficial.

AN EIGHT HOURS DAY ENFORCED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

With regard to the enforced limitation by Act of Parliament of labour to Eight Hours of the day, there are many considerations to be taken into account.

For example:—Eight Hours is a hard day's work in some lines of labor, and a very light day's work in others. Moreover, all the work done in the world is to supply the *wants* of the world; which wants, from day to day and from season to season, vary considerably.

All work therefore, has to be prosecuted with regard to exigencies, opportunities, and circumstances.

There is a fundamental difference between out-door work and in-door work.

All out-door work has to be regulated by length or shortness of days; short days in winter, long days in summer, as well as by such circumstances as cold and heat, wet weather and dry.

We cannot get rid of this, nor can we get rid of such contingencies as rains, storms, fires and floods; the freezing up of harbours and rivers in Winter, and the opening of navigation in Spring, and rush of business consequent thereon.

We cannot have an enforced Eight Hour day, applicable to all seasons, for those who work on the Land, or for the great army of Lumberers, or Sailors, or Fishermen; or for Builders of Railways and other public works in the open air; in fact, for the vast majority of those who work in a country like Canada.

Even with regard to those who work in shops, and can work in winter as well as in summer, the following considerations are pertinent:—

(1.) It is useless to expect to get ten hours' wages for eight hours' work.

(2.) Leisure, unless accompanied by power of self-

BR 115
E 3
H 24

control, and good moral stamina, as a matter of fact, is a time of temptation, and becomes to very many the occasion of drunkenness and licentiousness.

(3) Even indoor work must be subject to the changing wants of mankind.

We cannot change times and seasons, nor control the operations of nature. There must be a heavy pressure at one time, and correspondingly light pressure at another.

It was lately said by a workman in this city, that he had once worked seventy hours at a stretch. There was some very urgent necessity for this, no doubt, or he would not have been required to do it.

The last time I crossed the Atlantic we were in a fog for four consecutive days, during the whole of which time the Captain scarcely ever left the Bridge.

Bankers are supposed generally to have short hours. In many cases this is true, in others it is a delusion. When I came to Montreal, my hours were from nine o'clock in the morning till eleven o'clock at night, and that for months together. The work could not possibly have been done without it. The necessities of the case called for it.

Numbers of other cases might be cited, showing that hard and fast rules must bend and give way to the laws of nature, and the exigencies of the world we live in.

Nothing I am now saying, however, would prevent men from endeavouring, by lawful and proper methods, to get higher remuneration for their work, when they think they ought to have it, all with due regard to the rights of other workmen, as well as of employers.

But I say this, that higher wages, unless accompanied by moral stamina, have often proved a curse rather than a blessing. This is not a fancy, or opinion, or theory, but a fact of experience.

TO WHOM IS THE GROWTH OF A CITY DUE?

It is sometimes said, that as it is to the Labourers of a city that its growth is due, so they ought to have the benefit of such growth.

This looks plausible, but let us consider the facts. Take our own city. Without going back to the reason why the infant settlement of M. de Maisonneuve became a city at all, to what is it due that Montreal is not to-day a city of thirty or forty thousand inhabitants?

It is due to several causes:—

First. To the forecasting brains and intelligence of the men who in former days improved the navigation of the river and first put inland steamboats upon it; devoting time, money, energy and mental capacity, year after year, to the accomplishment of the object.

Second. To the forecasting brains and ability of the men who brought ocean steamers up to this port and made Montreal a centre of ocean trade, with the same devotion of money, energy, brains and intelligence, concentrated year after year upon this great object.

Third. To the men whose busy brains and strong mental capacity and intelligence conceived, and whose energy carried out, the vast system of Canals and Railways centreing in Montreal; with all their gigantic and far-reaching results.

Fourth. To the men who saw and utilized by their forecasting brains and ability, the manufacturing capabilities of Montreal, and who have succeeded in building up our factories of all descriptions.

Let me not be told that they have had their reward in the success of these enterprises. For vast amounts have been lost as well as gained by them. The proprietors of the Grand Trunk have lost more than fifty millions of

BR 115
E 3
H 24

dollars by the enterprise, and many of the men who have had to do with these great developments died poor.

Montreal has always been a great centre of both the Exporting and the Importing trade.

The men who developed this have had a share in the good work. Some of these have prospered, some have not.

It is well known, also, that the city lives by the country. If there were no Provinces of the Dominion, there would be no Montreal.

The vast army of settlers, farmers, traders, and private individuals, in all parts of Canada, who have been customers to our wholesale houses, consuming the goods they imported, and who have sent such masses of goods here for sale year after year; all these, too, have had some share in building up this city and making the land in it worth what it is.

It is well known that, of these, numbers have lost money and died poor in the process.

It is *not* the labourers only; it is all these that must be taken into account in considering who have been the making of Montreal.

Now, if it is proposed to divide amongst all of these classes, equitably, man by man, the profit arising from the improved value of land in Montreal, I apprehend that any commission of experts that undertook the task would not finish its sittings until we were all dead; which is as much as to say that it would be an utterly impracticable task.

It is, however, a very noticeable and gratifying fact, that the artizan class in Montreal does own a large amount of property in the city or its suburbs, and has large amounts of money in our Savings Banks. Of the 28,000 owners of real estate in Montreal. 11,000 own properties worth between $1,000 to $2,000. A large number of these are undoubtedly artizans. It is a fact,

also, that the majority in number of those who own the money deposited in our Savings Banks are working men and working women.

PERSONS OUT OF WORK.

But what shall be said of the large number of unfortunate people who are out of work. We all know that at present this is far more a trouble of the United States than of Canada.

The source of the trouble then must be political; it arises from bad legislation; otherwise Canada would have been affected to the same extent.

The United States is a country of popular government.

If the people make unwise laws, and suffer in consequence, they have the ultimate remedy in their own hands.

But what of the suffering in the meantime?

What has Christianity to say to that?

Christianity says:—

"Relieve the suffering"; "Let the rich help the poor," and continue to help them until circumstances change.

And as to the future, Christianity says: "Let all men, artizans included, be sober, thrifty, and industrious; and live a life of self-control and temperance, bringing up their children by the same rule."

If, then, from mistaken legislation, bad seasons, or what not, they are thrown out of work again, they will have a fund to fall back upon.

Men may deride thrift, but that is the sovereign cure for the labourer's troubles, unless where sudden death, accident, or some unforeseen calamity overtakes him.

BR 115
E 3
H 24

Let men control their appetites, avoid pestilent luxuries, and keep off every course of life which will dissipate their money; they will rarely need to receive charity, unless through accident or unavoidable misfortune.

But then—I emphasize this—thrift, to be truly effective, should begin early in life.

Any boy put out to work at 14 years of age, may save enough to amount to at least $500 by the time he is 25; and, if skilful, he may save as much as $1,000.

But how many of our boys begin early in life a course of extravagant expenditure, and may be seen smoking on our streets, and indulging in drinking, gambling, and sport, to the emptying of their pockets and the injury of their bodies and souls.

How much do the working men and boys of Montreal spend on drink, tobacco and sport in a single year?

A friend of mine the other day was riding in the street cars. Next to him was a working man who was in a talkative mood, and told how he had been to the Races. "*I have lost eight dollars,*" he said, "*but I have had a jolly day's sport.*" And he seemed well satisfied. He had his reward. But it may be, that some day he will feel the want of that eight dollars.

But what of working girls in New York, it may be said, and the wretched wages of sewing-women?

They *are* wretched wages. But alongside this, in the very same city and the very same streets, you have such a scarcity of young women for domestic service, that their wages are just as much above a reasonable level as the others are below it.

Take all the working women of New York, domestic and outside, pool all their earnings and divide to each equally; I have a strong impression that every one would have a comfortable maintenance.

There are, in truth, thousands of young women in our

cities who are in the wrong place, in places where they are not wanted, crowding one another for a mere pittance in sewing-work, whose proper sphere is domestic service.

They would in such service get far more than they now do, even if servants' wages were to come down thirty per cent.

But a person acquainted with the facts has told me that many American young women are too proud to serve a mistress. A false pride, which has its root in unsound ideas early inculcated.

A minister in this city has said that there must be something wrong about many of these things. Very true, and this is one of the worst.

Here again Christianity would afford a radical remedy.*

NOTE.—There are very large numbers of men out of work in Australia.

The case is well worth considering. It it well known that in the larger provinces of Australia the class of artizans and workmen have had an unusual share in the government for many years past.

They naturally favoured such legislation as would give them the most work. All railways and telegraph lines are public property in Australia, and legislation for years ran in the channel of constructing more and more railways and public works of all kinds on money borrowed from the mother country. Private expenditure also on buildings, fed by the same source, was on an enormous scale, and so long as the borrowing power lasted, the condition of the Australian workman was one of the most fortunate in the world.

But the inevitable stop to borrowing came at last. Then, when no more money was to be got, this heavy expenditure ceased, and a revulsion set in which resulted in the most tremendous financial collapse that has ever been known in any country.

Public expenditure and private expenditure alike stopped, and, as a consequence, a vast number of men have been thrown out of employment.

The workmen are now crying out for work; but work cannot be extemporised or created out of nothing; and above all, it cannot be carried on without money.

The working class of Australia will learn some useful lessons from this severe experience; one lesson being that the laws of political economy are as sure in their action as the laws of gravitation."

BR 115
E 3
H 24

THE TEACHING OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION ON THE SUBJECT.

Nothing is more remarkable in the genesis of Christianity than this, that, while it aims at setting up the Kingdom of God on the earth, in which all wrongs would be redressed—the people being "all righteous," the land being "a land of uprightness,"—it says not one word about the Reorganization either of Society or of Government. While denouncing vehemently certain wrongs, neither the Founder of Christianity, nor His Apostles, ever denounced tyrannical systems of Government, or oppressive organizations in social life.

That such existed at the time is a well-known fact, but Jesus Christ and His Apostles with regard to them were silent.

What then were the *means* by which Christianity sought to effect its object of reforming the world, and putting all things therein on a basis of righteousness?

I answer,—it relied wholly upon reforming the *character of each individual in it.*

To every man, rich or poor, king or subject, employer or employed, it begins at the foundation by saying, "REPENT AND BE CONVERTED. YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

And it supplied a *moral power* sufficient for the accomplishment of this revolution, viz.: the power of the Holy Ghost. It aimed at the individual, and at the accomplishment of all its far-reaching objects, through the individual.

If other systems say "reorganize society," "re-constitute government," Christianity says, "reorganize and re-constitute the character of every man, woman and child in it." And this is its method, in every sphere of its manifestation.

You will at once gather that I hold Godliness, or practical Christianity, to be profitable for this life, as well as for the life to come. For the development spoken of is in this life. But the profit is not always monetary profit.

Righteousness between man and man finds its only sphere of operation in this world. The idea that Christianity ignores this life, or weakens regard for it, or makes men careless of the obligations, duties, and responsibilities connected with it, is entirely fallacious.

The Christianity taught by our Saviour and His Apostles, gives every one who submits to it a healthy body, by sobriety and chastity; a thoughtful mind, by occupying it with great truths; a peaceful home, by inculcating upon children obedience, and upon parents kindness and wise training. It makes the man who submits to it, an honest servant or a considerate employer; it enables a judicious use to be made of this world's goods if they are obtained, and develops a spirit of honourable patience if they are not. And the last, for the good reason, that virtuous poverty and straitened circumstances are often the best discipline for the life of man; while riches may be the greatest possible snare.

Christianity does not propose to abolish all poverty—for it does not abolish widowhood, orphanhood, misfortune, accident, or sudden death.

But it *will* abolish all poverty that arises from drunkenness, idleness, or vice. This, according to the testimony of those who have investigated the subject, is often three-fourths of the whole, and is always a considerable portion of it. And for the rest, it lays a solemn charge on the rich to care for the poor; a charge which, on the whole, and in all ages, they have fulfilled.

Christianity—if its principles were adopted by all

BR 115
E 3
H 24

employers, and all employed—would evidently put an end, once for all, to all difficulties and controversies between them. It has a word for each, which goes to the very root of the matter.

The teaching of the Apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Ghost, puts a charge upon Masters to "*render to their servants what is just and equal.*" It commands them to "*forbear threatening,*" and it enforces this, by the declaration, that there is a *Master in Heaven* to whom every earthly master is accountable.

It is to be observed that Christianity puts the employee in the position of a contracting party, with whom an agreement on fair and equitable principles must be made at all times, and in every description of employment.

Then, the servant (and every man who serves others, no matter how high his position, or how low, is embraced in this) is commanded to serve, "*not with eyeservice*"; not to be lazy when the master's or foreman's eye is off him; not simply to serve his earthly master, but his Heavenly Master.

"*With good will and heartiness, rendering service,*" not simply to man, but to God.

Thus, in the case, both of employers and employed alike, the most powerful *motives* are brought to bear. These are not mere sentimental precepts, or mere exhortations. The operation of these powerful motives upon individual men, could not possibly fail to bring about equity and fair dealing on both sides, and put an end to injustice and all occasion for labour disputes and contests.

In the writings of those who reject Christianity, there is, in dealing with the subject, a plentiful assertion of metaphysical principles; but a conspicuous want of that marshalling of facts, which is essential to scientific

deduction. In this slight contribution to the consideration of a great subject, I propose to bring out certain facts of personal observation, and to reason from them to what appear to be just conclusions.

My father, who worked at his trade in youth, like all other tradesmen in England at that time, afterwards settled in business for himself, and became an employer of other men.

When I was old enough, I kept his accounts, and in doing so spent many hours in the shop where his men were working; paid them their wages, and became intimately acquainted with them, and their ways of thinking and living. Amongst these men, I remember one in particular; he was a good workman, but he was much more; he was sober, industrious and *reliable*, always in his place in the shop, and I may add, always in his place in church on Sunday, where I have seen him repeatedly, having just as respectable an appearance as any other man.

Wages were not high. Times were hard. Trade in the town during all my younger days was depressed. Yet this man managed year by year, steadily to save money.

After a time he commenced business for himself; and, when my father retired, he bought out the stock and good-will, and paid cash for the whole of it.

Nearly twenty years afterwards, revisiting England, I found him in the same town, with a much enlarged business and far better premises—a wealthy and prosperous man.

What made him what he was? Not simply his ability as a workman, but his *character as a man.*

In the same shop, at the same time, was another man: a cleverer workman than the other. His handicraft was beautiful to see, but character in this instance was wanting. He was unsteady, fond of intoxicating drink, and

BR 115
E 3
H 2.4

unreliable. He spent fully fifty per cent. of his wages in luxuries—for drink and tobacco are undeniably luxuries.

As an inevitable result of this course of life, he saved nothing, and in time he had to leave the shop.

This man led a wandering life, working by fits and starts in one town and another, and was well known throughout a wide district as the cleverest workman at his trade, and the most unsteady.

During the same visit to my native town, a person whom I had known twenty years before as a workman, accosted me in the street. Enquiring of his condition, he took me to a large manufactory and told me that he was the head of it. In the office of this establishment, I met another who had formerly been a workman in the same shop as the other. These two had formed a partnership, commenced business, and were now the sole owners of this great factory.

What was it that made them what they were? In addition to their skill as workmen, it was the fact that they were sober, thrifty, enterprising, and honourable.

These things took place in England more than thirty years ago.

None of these men earned such high wages as men do on this side the Atlantic. And they had no votes, for the Reform Bill had not enfranchised the town. But they were reading, thinking, church-going men—in a word, they were men of *character*.

Just before I left England it was my lot, in the position I then filled, to receive a visit, in a business capacity, from the Premier of Nova Scotia. He had once been a working printer in a newspaper office, as I heard him say, and had risen, first to be the proprietor of the journal, then to be a member of Parliament, and finally the leader of the Liberal party and the head of the Government. I

introduced him to the Mayor of the town, a large manufacturer, who took us over his great establishment.

On passing a certain bench the Mayor stopped and remarked significantly: "*that is where I used to work.*"

What had made him what he was? All could be summed up in one word—INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER.

A certain part of that district was [illegible] and it is to-day, with foundries, rolling-mills and collieries; great works that had all grown up in two generations out of the skill, intelligence, and thrift, of a blacksmith and his brother; men of singular capacity, perseverance, and godliness; men who in their prosperity remembered the cause of God and contributed munificently to sustain it.

All the sober and industrious working men in that district did not rise to be employers. That would have been an impossibility. I give the foregoing as instances of what was possible to some, while as to the rest, I can say from personal knowledge that they were both respectable and respected.

But in the district just spoken of there were thousands of men of another sort, skilful enough in handicraft, but lacking in moral fibre, never darkening the door of a Church, who made no progress in life, lived in miserable homes, and ended their days as poor as they began. Why? They were lacking in the character that Christianity would have given them.

They regularly spent in luxuries,—drink, tobacco, and sport,—twenty, forty, or even fifty per cent. of their earnings. Not many of these men were absolutely drunkards, in the ordinary sense of the term. But they spent a large amount of money in drinking, and a large amount of both time and money in sport.

BR 115
E 3
H 24

Many workmen of this class, rarely, if ever, worked more than four or five days in the week.

But they attended by thousands every race and sporting event in the district. Monday, in that busy town, came to be called *Saint* Monday. I was a clerk in one of the Banks of the town. If any of *us* had kept Saint Monday even once, he would have been in danger of dismissal.

If it is objected that these men were Christians, having been baptized into the Christian faith, and brought up many of them, in Church and Sunday School, I answer, that to call these men Christians, *i.e.*, Disciples of Jesus Christ, would be a gross absurdity.

They were no more Christians than they were Mohammedans.

Some of these could declaim by the hour upon their political and social grievances. Instead of blaming themselves, and seeking to reform their own character, they blamed the organization of society and Government for the condition in which they lived, and were loud in their demands for more freedom, more wages, more leisure, and more of the good things of life generally, all to be furnished at the expense of other people.

In the same town there were thousands of working men, God-fearing, church-attending, industrious, sober, thrifty. The homes of these men were places of comfort and respectability. Cleanliness and order prevailed, children were well brought up, and a comfortable fireside and a neat book-shelf greeted them on their return from work.

They would not live in the dirty places which the idle and the vicious were satisfied with, for it is a fact, certified to by wide experience on both sides of the Atlantic,

that when a man submits to the power of Christianity, he will infallibly rise out of low surroundings.

Many of these men were members of churches which gave them an equal part with their employers in managing the affairs of the congregation.

It was my lot to have much to do for years with this class, and I have seen how respectable and respected such men were; although socially they were wage-earning mechanics.

Eschewing the baneful luxuries of drink, tobacco and gambling, these men had the real luxuries of a good home, a balance in the Savings Bank, a place in the Church, and a good prospect for old age.

The Secretary of a Lay Preachers' Society of the town was a workingman, and dirty employment he had. But on Sunday he appeared as a senior officer of the Church; and when I left England my papers of transmission bore his signature.

Such were the workings of Christianity amongst the mechanics and artizans of England, as I knew them years ago.

All which, with the added experiences of many years here, have convinced me that organized schemes for the betterment of the working-man, based upon the rejection, or the ignoring of Christianity, are apt to prove delusions when brought to the test of experiment. The French Revolution of 1789 was such an experiment. It was not merely a political upheaval, but a socialistic re-construction on the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. It was a tremendous experiment, but proved a dismal failure, as did also the second revolution on the same principles when Louis Philippe was overthrown.

Mark this: I do not say that no men are sober, indus-

BR 115
E 3
H 24

trious, and respectable who are not good Christians. I know to the contrary.

But, however good and respectable they may be, they would be of a higher type of manhood if they were Christians. And this I assert without hesitation, that an infallible way of making men sober, industrious, and respectable, is to make Christianity a vital force in their lives.

CONCLUSION.

In what I have said about certain theories, I have spoken with a certain amount of diffidence, for they are deep and difficult matters.

But even in these, I have drawn largely from personal experience.

But what I have said respecting *Christianity* and its working, I have said without reservation.

I have taken part at various times, and in various places, both on this side of the Atlantic and the other; in works of which the inspiring motive, and all the subordinate means employed were Christian; and I have to say that these have never in any single instance failed to uplift the temporal, and social condition of those who were affected by them.

Leaving out of sight altogether, spiritual results, I say that Christianity when applied to the degraded poor, has invariably lifted them out of their degradation; and put them into circumstances of decency, order and comfort, when its operations were continued for a sufficient length of time.

Without saying one word about dirty homes, filthy

rooms, over-crowding, unsanitary surroundings; let Ministers and workers of Christian churches put the Gospel of Christ in operation among such, and it will surely, with rare exceptions, by the mighty working of moral and spiritual forces, lift up the denizens of these places out of the dirt, and make them respectable, useful, worthy citizens of an earthly community; having, besides, a good hope of an inheritance in the world to come.

MONTREAL,
March, 1894.

BR 115
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